

STANDPOINT

from

Dr. Georgi Ivanov Shopov,

Professor at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

on the materials submitted for the competition

for the academic position of associate professor

at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv,

in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics (scientific specialty "Political Economy - Public Sector Economics and Social Policy").

In the competition for "Associate Professor" announced in the State Gazette, no. 94 of 12.11.2021 and on the inter-web-page of Plovdiv University (PU) "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Economic Sciences at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences (FESS), as the only candidate participated Dr. Blaga Madjurova, Chief Assistant at PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

1. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant

By Order No. RD-2164/11.01.2022 of the Rector of PU "Paisii Hilendarski", I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury for the above competition for the academic position of Associate Professor.

The set of materials submitted by the only candidate, Dr. Blaga Madjurova, is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU.

She possesses a PhD in Political Economy, which she obtained in 2014 at the PU - Department of Economic Sciences at the FESS. Previously, she worked in the public sector (as an expert in the Plovdiv Municipality, in the Ministry of Economy and Energy, Head of the Political Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in the Council of Ministers), in the private sector (expert in PT Holding JSC), in the third sector (expert in "Plovdiv - European Capital of Culture" Foundation). This professional activity is a bridge to her subsequent teaching and research work at PU.

In 2017, she was elected as a chief assistant at the Department of Economic Sciences at the Faculty of Economics.

My personal *direct Impressions* are from a joint participation in autumn 2021 in an inter-national scientific conference "Economic, Regional and Social Challenges in the Transition to a Green Economy" organized by the Department of Economic Sciences. During the discussions Dr. Madjurova actively participated with her clear opinion and scientific arguments.

My *indirect impressions* are as a reviewer of the monograph "Social cohesion (national, regional and structural dimensions in the context Bulgaria - EU - Western Balkans)" (2019), where she is

co-author with D. Stoyanova and S. Raichev. Based on my entirely positive review of this work, I recommended the printing of the monograph by the PU publishing house.

2. General description of the applicant's activities

2.1. Assessment of the educational and pedagogical activity and preparation of the candidate.

Dr. Blaga Madjurova has for the period 2017 - 2021 an auditorial employment of 1366 hours of lectures and exercises, as well as other educational-pedagogical practice (semester exams, consultations and examination of coursework) - 450 hours. She lectures in a bachelor-graduate level on the following academic topics: Social Policy, Social Policy and Social Programmes, Public Service Management, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Economics. Some of the classes are at the Faculty of Pedagogy of PU (students on "Social Activities"). Chief Assistant Dr. Blaga Madjurova has been a guest lecturer under the Erasmus+ Programme for teaching mobility at universities in Valladolid (Spain) and Turin (Italy). She has also developed curricula in two disciplines ("Economics" and "Public Sector Economics") and lectured on them. She is co-author with prof. Y. Hristoskov of the textbook "Social Policy" (2020).

2.2. Compliance with the minimum national requirements under Article 2 b of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation (Article 1a, paragraph 1).

According to the report on the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the LRAADB for holding the academic position of Associate Professor, the candidate Dr. Madjurova has 528.9 points with a required minimum threshold of 400 points. According to the additional indicators adopted by the Faculty Council (FC) of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences (FESS), prof. Dr. Blaga Madjurova has 353.25 points, with a minimum threshold of 100 points.

With a total of 882.15 points, the candidate Blaga Madjurova fully meets both the National Minimum Requirements, according to the LDASRB (Article 2-b) and the Regulations for its implementation (Article 1a, paragraph 1), and the Additional Requirements for the Academic Position of Associate Professor, set by the FC of FESS.

2.3. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied activity.

The candidate has submitted a total of 22 scientific works, including: 1 standalone monograph; participation with sections/chapters in 3 collective monographs; 16 studies, scientific articles and conference reports; 1 book (based on a defended dissertation), 1 textbook and a list certifying participation in 9 scientific research projects (prevailing part - projects funded by the Research Fund of PU). 16 scientific works, 1 textbook and 9 scientific research projects are accepted for assessment in the present opinion. Not included are 4 research papers based on the dissertation (3 research papers plus 1 book based on the dissertation) and 2 research papers from the

competition for the post of Assistant Professor. The total volume of the 16 publications is 519 pages, of which 370 pages in monographs, 65 pages in scientific studies, articles and reports and 84 pages in a textbook. The distribution of the 16 scientific works according to the relevant headings, in the country and abroad, is as follows: 12 have been published in the country and 4 scientific articles and papers - in foreign publications. Of the 11 published scientific studies, articles and reports, 8 are in English, making them accessible to a wider readership.

The 7 author's citations in scientific publications in the country and abroad (including in refereed and indexed in world-known and national databases with scientific information), as well as in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer review, reveal the candidate as a recognizable scientist.

The publications are an own work of Dr. Blaga Madjurova, and her participation in collective publications is certified by protocols between the co-authors. The structure of the scientific-applied activity shows that the candidate is far from focusing on the development of publications related to her teaching activity, but has marked her research interests and achievements in the field of competition. This is a good example of combining research with teaching, with the results of the research being used in the academic work with students.

I confirm the *scientific contributions* claimed by Dr. Madjurova through her publications, in particular those in the field of social policy and related to the *enrichment of scientific knowledge* regarding:

- the study of macroeconomic factors and the search for policy solutions to overcome "social evils" such as poverty and inequality: how to manage the social dimension of economic activity and what influences and helps overcome "social evils" (a concept rarely used in Bulgarian studies);
- the clarification of the concept of "social cohesion" and the study of the impact it has on the economic and social system, leading to the conclusion about the role of public policies in our country that fail to contribute to the convergence of Bulgaria and the EU;
- the study of the macroeconomic dimensions of the phenomenon of the working poor and the substantiation with own results of the conclusion that the problem of the working poor is the low minimum wage, but also the low amount of aggregate income distributed among the household members, their low educational level, lack of labour qualification and low labour intensity.

To summarize and complement my characterization of Dr. Madjurova's teaching and research activities, I would like to note *that I consider the presented habilitation book, scientific publications and contributions as a personal contribution and a product of the candidate's research in accordance with the norm of scientific ethics according to the procedure regulated in the LDASRB and the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU.*

3. Critical comments and recommendations

I have no critical comments.

In relation to the habilitation book "Social evils - links to macroeconomic determinants and policies to overcome them", I would suggest that in future research papers, in addition to income inequalities, the colleague should focus on research on other aspects of inequality.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Dr. Blaga Madjurova meet all the requirements of the LDASRB, the Regulations for the implementation of the LDASRB and the relevant Rules of the PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The candidate has presented a sufficient number of scientific works with a good quality, published after the defence of the PhD thesis. In the works submitted for the competition there are own scientific and applied contributions which have received national and international recognition as a representative part of them have been published in monographs, in a refereed journal with a significant impact-factor, in scientific compendiums and by academic publishing houses. The presented works have a scientific and practical character, some of them are directly oriented to the educational work in the PU. The scientific and teaching qualification of Dr. Blaga Madjurova is incontestable. The results achieved by her in teaching and in scientific research activities fully comply with the specific requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, adopted in connection with the PU Rules for the application of LDASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers submitted for the competition, analysis of their significance and contributions, *I give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences for the election of the Chief Assistant Dr. Blaga Madjurova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" at PU "P.Hilendarski" in the professional field 3.8. Economics (scientific specialty "Political Economy - Public Sector Economics and Social Policy")*.

14.02.2022

Signed:

Prof. Georgi Shopov, PhD